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## [Father's Day an Emotional and Poignant Part of Men's Health](#)

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*By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class (SW/AW) Gretchen M. Albrecht, Naval Hospital Bremerton Public Affairs*



I am an 11 year active duty Sailor stationed at Naval Hospital Bremerton (NHB) taking care of our five year old and five month old boys while dad does his duty assignment overseas.

***Editors note: With Navy Medicine designating June as 'Men's Health' month, a Sailor shares a few words on the day specifically set aside for husbands and dads currently serving and have served; Father's Day.***

Father's Day is just around the corner. Children are picking out gifts for dad from hardware store gift cards to adorable hand and foot print art to the always loved tie, which can be obnoxious yet amazing at the same time. Bar-b-ques are planned and the family is coming together to celebrate dad, the hard-working, loving man who does so much to support his family and loves his kids with everything he has. Someone with strong moral character his kids can look up to and grow up to be like.

I should preface this with the fact that I am describing my own father as well as my husband and father to our two boys.



Unfortunately, this Father's Day I find my situation to be new as I am a thousand miles away from my own amazing father and my husband is even farther away – over 7,300 miles due to being currently stationed in Bahrain.

When people said I was marrying someone just like my dad I was okay with that. In fact I was pretty excited because both are pretty amazing. Unfortunately, this Father's Day I find my situation to be new as I am a thousand miles away from my own amazing father and my husband is even farther away – over 7,300 miles due to being currently stationed in Bahrain.

I am an 11 year active duty Sailor stationed at Naval Hospital Bremerton (NHB) taking care of our five year old and five month old boys while dad does his duty assignment overseas.

Honestly, there are some days I am just trying to stay afloat – stay afloat and not fall asleep while eating dinner. Now it isn't all bad. My husband and I knew we would miss things with each other as well as

our kids when we got married six and a half years ago but it was worth it.

We loved each other as well as the Navy and we have and will continue to make it work. But at certain times like Father's Day there just seems to be a tinge of sadness. While everyone celebrates the amazing daddies in their lives, as we celebrate ours, he isn't there to open his gifts, play catch with his son or kick back at a bar-b-que. He is gone on deployment. There is a void I am desperately trying to fill.

Every married couple with children has probably experienced separation. There are birthdays postponed and holidays missed. There is a mom responsible for also being dad...and umpire, arbitrator, and font of knowledge.



My five year old asks for daddy daily.

I consider myself lucky to have transferred to NHB this past fall and walk into a place with such amazing co-workers, mentors and chain of command that are caring, supportive and understanding to my situation. They really give meaning to the term Navy family. I am lucky in that regard to have complete strangers care about not only my career but my family. They have come to my son's Christmas pageant and pre-school graduation and are there to support not only me but my kids while their dad can't due to his current assignment. It is the true definition of being a shipmate.

I have amazing and fun neighbors who will talk and love up on my baby while I unwind after work. They were there to install my new washer and dryer when I was seven months pregnant and continue to be there even for little things like if I forget to take my trash cans to the curb on trash day. They even motivate me to work out, but don't forget to get me a mini milk shake every now and then. They too personify the term Navy Family.



I consider myself and my boys lucky because we have such an amazing man to miss this Father's Day.

The tinge of sadness comes when I think about my boys and what they are missing. My five year old asks for daddy daily. It usually turns to tears at night when he misses him most. He asks when he can turn six because he knows his dad comes home when he is six. My five month old was two months the last time his daddy held him. He smiled at him and slept peacefully on his chest but dad has not been able to make him giggle or watch him attempt to crawl. Dad won't hold him again until our son can walk to him. A years worth of memories experienced alone, and through a camera lens.

Do not get me wrong. I consider myself and my boys lucky because we have such an amazing man to miss this Father's Day. We are not the only ones. Hundreds of daddies will lace up their combat boots and head to work this Sunday. Deployed in a far off country, underway sailing on or under the seas, standing watch or out on training missions, these everyday heroes will continue to do what needs to be done even if it means missing the one day out of the year meant to celebrate them.

Don't worry about us back home because although the shoes left behind are big, us moms will fill them the best we can. Your children know or will grow up to know that their daddies loved them so much they were willing to sacrifice much for their future.

Here's to the dads so far away missing their special day with their kids and to all the moms playing both parent roles the best they can. You are succeeding and your kids are going to be alright.

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